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Bowling Green State University

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BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Engagement initiative making significant progress

PEDAGOGIES OF ENGAGEMENT

In fall 2004, President Sidney Ribeau launched the "Organizing for Engagement" initiative at BGSU, designed to connect the resources of the University with

the economic, social and cultural needs of our community, state and region. Ribeau noted that, increasingly, state legislatures across the nation are calling upon higher education institutions to establish partnerships and alliances with external constituents to improve the quality of life in our communities.

Here in Ohio, the April 2004 report of the governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE) recognized that Ohio's colleges and universities play a critical role in transforming our state by connecting our intellectual, human, technical and physical resources to societal problems to improve the quality of life for all residents of our state and regions.

During the 2004-05 academic year, a number of presidential task forces and committees were established, including the Task Force on the Scholarship of Engagement, the Standards Committee on the Scholarship of Engagement, the Committee on Service Learning, and the Engaged University Council.

In addition, President Ribeau appointed several University delegations that represented BGSU at two national conferences on engagement—at Penn State in October 2004 and Michigan State in May 2005—as we joined

- > Office of Service Learning Initiatives
- > BGeXperience
- > General Education Curriculum/BG Perspective
- > Office of Campus Involvement/Student Affairs
- > Office of Undergraduate Research
- > Cooperative Learning Experiences
- > Internships
- > Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology

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engaged
learning
community**

the national dialogue on outreach and engagement. The Office of Engagement also hosted several symposia with deans, academic chairs and directors, as well as open forums with faculty that featured national leaders in the engagement arena. In June 2005, as a culmination of the year's activities, the Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution in support of the integration of the scholarship of engagement into the faculty recognition and reward structure at BGSU, to be completed by December of this year.

During the 2005-06 academic year, the engagement initiative has continued to make significant progress in a number of key areas, including, but not limited to, the initiatives outlined below.

President hosts retreat with provost and deans

On March 23, President Ribeau convened a half-day retreat with the provost and deans to

are continuing to work on a definition of the scholarship of engagement and issues related to its evaluation and documentation in their disciplines. Many of the deans noted that the guidelines developed by the Standards Committee on the Scholarship of Engagement were helpful to department chairs and faculty who are actively engaged in this discussion.

New Carnegie elective classification for engagement

In 2005, the Carnegie Foundation undertook a major revision of the basic classification system of American colleges and universities. In the process it has introduced a new set of "elective" classifications, now under development. The elective classifications will rely on volunteer participation by institutions that have a strong commitment to documenting their activity in the elective area identified. The first of these new elective classifications will focus on community engagement, and BGSU has submitted a letter of intention requesting to be considered for approval to participate in this new elective classification.

The review process for this classification is highly competitive and will require extensive documentation in many areas, including evidence of institutional commitment, descriptions of focused engagement activities—including curricular engagement—as well as other data that will be evaluated by a national panel.

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review progress on integrating the scholarship of engagement into the faculty recognition and reward structure at BGSU. The deans, department chairs, unit directors and faculty have been working together since fall 2005 to integrate the scholarship of engagement into college-level and departmental-level promotion, tenure and merit policies. At the retreat, the deans reported on significant progress in each of the colleges, with the goal of having a draft document from each of the department chairs to review by the end of April. Deans and department chairs, unit directors and faculty will have additional time to confer and revise their documents throughout the summer and fall semester of 2006.

Many academic departments noted that faculty teaching, research/creative activity/scholarship of engagement, and service is already included in their promotion, tenure and merit documents; however, others noted that they

Commitment to civility garners national recognition

Community, students come **together**

The University has received a national award for a program designed to help incoming students be better citizens of the greater community.

The initiative, called "Concepts, Cooperation and Consensus: Community Responsibility and the Bowling Green Experience," won a bronze Excellence Award from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). BGSU representatives and Bowling Green Mayor John Quinn presented the program in March at the organization's annual conference, where they accepted the award.

BGSU won in the "Enrollment Management, Orientation, First-Year, Other-Year and Related Programs and Services" category. The NASPA awards "recognize the contributions of members who are transforming higher education through outstanding programs, innovative services and effective administration," the organization says.

Establishing better community relations is an ongoing challenge for BGSU, said Jill Carr, associate dean of students. Many residents of Bowling Green brace themselves each August for the return of the students, who often bring with them loud parties, litter and bad behavior.

Being away from home and family can lead young people to feel they are free from responsibility, say student affairs personnel. To counter this sense of anonymity and lack of engagement, University and city representatives joined forces last year to develop the outreach program, reasoning that if students felt welcomed and initiated into the community, they would in turn be considerate of their neighbors and take advantage of all Bowling Green has to offer.

"You can't create esprit de corps and a climate of civility with one program," said Dr. Roger Thibault, arts and sciences

associate dean for resources and planning. "But we hope that if we begin with this program and then reinforce the idea through the second, third and fourth years through engagement and service-learning activities, and continue integrating the community into campus life, we can impress upon students that this is a campus and a community that value civility."

"The program has been a good thing from a community standpoint," said Quinn, himself a BGSU alumnus. "We've been striving for years to impress upon students that you don't just pick a college, you pick a community, and we think this is a great instrument for doing this."

Careful planning

The Community Involvement Team developed the program. Campus members included Carr; Thibault; James Wiegand, director of public safety; Bryan Benner, associate vice president for administration, and Dr. Bob Midden, director of the Chapman Community. From the city were Mayor Quinn; Diane Tache, assistant principal of Bowling

Green High School; Earlene Kirkpatrick, director of Main Street BG; Mark McDonough, Bowling Green City Police, and Municipal Court Judge Mark Reddin.

They spent an entire year planning the two-hour program to be presented during the BGeXperience for incoming freshmen, which takes place over two days before the start of school. They also oversaw production of a video introducing students to the area and to their responsibilities as citizens.

The committee recruited more than 40 business owners, municipal court staff, city police officers, local attorneys, school board members, high school administrators, the city administrator, merchants and chamber of commerce staff to meet with the students. The team also provided training for the community participants over the summer to prepare them to lead the 152 sessions.

"The level of community involvement was what was unique about the program," said Carr. "That and the fact that we reached all the new students.

It also brought the community members in contact with a larger number of our students, and that's so important," she added. "Often the only students they see is the small minority who are behaving badly."

A revealing experience

The experience was revealing for both the students and the community members, evaluations showed. A peer facilitator wrote, "I thought the session was helpful to students in generating thought about their role here at BGSU. As an incoming freshman, I never considered my role in the town. And as a senior, I still do not know of many landmarks off campus except for bars and restaurants. Had I been introduced to the city the way these students were, I feel I would have taken more advantage of what the city has to offer."

In the students' overall evaluation of the BGeXperience, one of the top five responses to what they liked best was that they now "felt more comfortable with campus, the city of Bowling Green and/or my surroundings."



Community Involvement Team members (from left) BG Mayor John Quinn, Dr. Roger Thibault and Jill Carr.

Engagement initiative

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BGSU has come a long way in a short time with the implementation of the engagement initiative on our campus, and it would be a significant achievement to be included in the inaugural group of colleges and universities selected to receive the engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation. Regardless of the outcome, however, the review process will provide our University with valuable feedback and a self-assessment that will help us as we move forward with the engagement initiative on our campus.

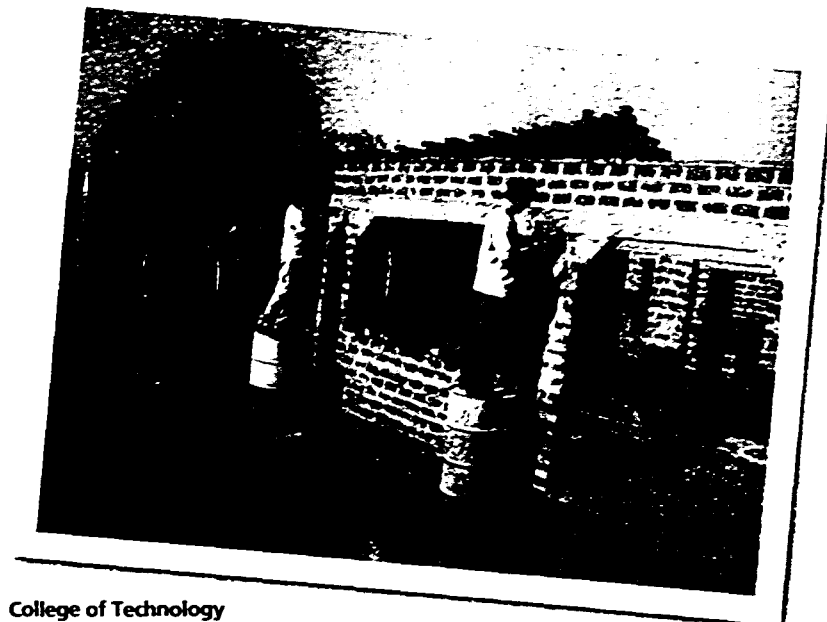
Pedagogies of engagement

Another area where we are now focusing our efforts is in the area of student engagement. BGSU has a rich history of student engagement in community service through the Office of Service Learning Initiatives, the Office of Campus Involvement, and through cooperative learning experiences and internships. In addition, our student organizations are a rich source

of opportunities for student engagement with the external community. Last spring, the president appointed a Committee on Service Learning to review our achievements in this area and to make recommendations as to how we might continue to promote service learning as an effective pedagogy to enhance academic performance and civic engagement among our students. The report of the Committee on Service Learning was presented to the president in mid-April.

Making engagement visible

A number of initiatives are currently under way to make engagement activity at BGSU more visible to both the University community and our external constituents. The provost's office is working on a database of faculty engagement projects, in collaboration with the College of Business Administration and the Office of Information Technology Services. In addition, the Office of Engagement is working on a Web site that is designed to communicate the campuswide engagement initiative efforts to our internal and external constituents. It will be ready to go online by the end of the semester.



College of Technology students assist Kenyans with the construction of a health clinic and an orphanage as part of technology faculty member Travis Chapin's Fulbright award. The engagement experience provided students hands-on learning while helping others.

Next steps

The University continues to make progress in a number of key areas related to the overall engagement initiative at BGSU. The last two years have focused heavily on both assessing capacity for engagement and on building capacity for engagement. As we enter the 2006-2007 academic year, we are well positioned for the next phase of the initiative that will focus on "doing"

engagement, as we continue to implement our vision for engagement in key strategic areas that will benefit both our University community as well as our state and region.

For additional information on BGSU's engagement initiative, contact Sandra MacNevin, director of the Office of Engagement, at 2-5301 or engagement@bgsu.edu.

Falcon Marching Band members join



Falcon football player Mike Weger on the field to celebrate his pledge of \$550,000 for the new Sebo Athletic Center. Weger's father, Roy, was band director in the 1950s when Robert Sebo was a band member. Mike was the Falcons' Most Valuable Player in both his junior and senior years and spent 11 years as a professional football player with the Detroit Lions and the Houston Oilers. His donation will fund a training room and adjacent seating for the Falcon Marching Band.

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The verdict is in: BGSU Mock Trial Team in top 10 nationally

The months of long hours and intense preparation have paid off—BGSU's Mock Trial Team not only made it to the national tournament, but once again bettered its standing. The team tied for 10th place at the annual competition, held March 17-19 in St. Paul, Minn.

This is the third year in a row BGSU has earned a spot at the national event, to which only the top 15 percent of teams are invited. And the team has improved each time: The University's first team, in 2003-04, finished 34th at the tournament; last year's team finished 23rd. Now the team has moved up to 10th, in a tie with the University of Wisconsin, Drake University and the University of Chicago.

In each of the last two years, BGSU has had two students among the 40 Intercollegiate All-American Mock Trial members, named by the American Mock Trial Association. They are chosen from the roughly 4,800 college students from 600 colleges competing in the program annually.

Also, this year, BGSU has the third-ranked mock trial attorney in the country: M. Allison Smith, a junior from Hamilton majoring in social work.

"It's satisfying to know we're getting some recognition after all our time, work and preparation," Smith said. "It's so much fun to be able to walk out with a smile."

In addition to Smith, the team members and the roles they play are: attorneys Alicia Weis, a senior from Willowbrook, Ill., majoring in political science and history, and Mike Ellis, a sophomore from Bellbrook majoring in business pre-law, and witnesses James Longley, a sophomore from New Knoxville majoring in creative writing; Mandy Valentine, a junior from Wilmington majoring in human development and family studies; Shannon Rawski, a freshman from Toledo majoring in interpersonal communication; LaToya Logan, a senior from Warren majoring in English, and Katie Hoskinson, a freshman from Hamilton majoring in English.

Intense preparation

Smith said the eight-month season is extremely demanding, a description echoed by team adviser Dr. M. Neil Browne, economics, and director of the IMPACT learning community. "It's really an oppressive workload," he said.

Participants must first memorize all of the articles, rule numbers and subsections of what are essentially the federal rules of evidence by number and be able to quote them, Smith said. In addition, they must learn courtroom procedure and decorum. Teams receive their case in early August and immediately begin studying. "You have to memorize all the witness affidavits and all the evidence and write direct exams and cross exams," Smith said.

"You have to be so comfortable with the material that when you meet your opposing team, you know what they will say and anticipate objections and motions they may make," she explained. But for the closing arguments, "you have to think on your feet," she said. "And having good witnesses is key. The people who play witnesses make up entire life stories for themselves, with jobs, spouses and children. That way, they can help convey the logic of the case.

"The two key components to being successful in Mock Trial are: one, you have to have complete and total dedication to the activity, and, two, you must have a natural comfort with yourself. You cannot appear too rigid or too nervous."

What looks natural and comfortable in the trial does not come about automatically, Browne said. It takes months of coaching to overcome students' natural inhibition about speaking in front of other people and to teach them to create the persona needed to influence judges and